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Personal Data – Too much too young?

Read about what we have to say about children and the huge challenges faced relating to their personal data - we all have a role to play but ultimately its the young who will need to exercise control.

GDPR legislation in the UK is doing a good job of reinforcing good practice in data protection. The ICO is showing its' got teeth and is willing to implement substantial fines for non compliance. Good news -but where do our children sit in this?

More specifically what is the importance right now of young people understanding and asserting their data protection rights?

We should remind ourselves of the word **right**. Data protection enshrined in GDPR is not just a dry technical thing, a tick box exercise or just a law to observe. As with all rights it has a cultural aspect too and one thing for sure – rights are generally worth fighting for.

The point about data is that it is so personal and so detailed – there is increasingly so much of ‘us’ out there that some collecting data will know far more about us than even our greatest personal friends.

Should we care? Well used well held data is great. It's useful our doctor can see our medical history isn't it? Even with things less important we mostly these days want as much convenience as possible – and that means sharing data. However – used against us the story is far different.

The thing about data is that it can be so potent, used against so easily that we need to make sure we police ourselves on it as individuals, collectives and organisations through a very clear sense of what is right and what is wrong. We need an intolerance for breaching this in just the same way as we have come to over other rights.

Young people as with all others must learn to **expect** that their data rights are protected, be **clear** on what is and what is not acceptable and be able to **assert** this in the same way as they might now for instance over equalities.

We aren't actually in a bad place though. Congratulations are due to schools because they are doing a good job both in meeting their own GDPR obligations and in imparting the right attitude in pupils. Happily also children seem to be taking the subject seriously and proving themselves pretty savvy in navigating themselves away from trouble.

But lets recognise that the onus is on us as adults whether in parental, teaching or guardianship roles to keep up the momentum – the truth is without this things have a tendency to slip and one thing for sure – the trend to exponentially more data collection will not.

Can control be maintained? Its definitely challenging. Government is going to have to maintain data protection as a priority and no doubt the ICO will have to keep up the pressure. Organisations will have to look to themselves in order to maintain their integrity. Our best bet though will be founded on self regulation and intolerance of misuse.

Our greatest hope is that the young people of today – those who thanks to teaching and a goodly dose of parental concern will have a learnt and

automatic feel for what is right and what is wrong in use of data will be those who influence it most in the future.

The One West team.



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